



Field Notes for The Week Of

3-13-2023

Springing Forward

Back to doing my morning chores in the dark again! Just when I was getting comfortable with the sun coming up earlier in the morning and allowing my headlamp to have a little rest, the government and its infinite wisdom wanted to throw me forward an hour meaning more work with the headlamp! I have to admit Sunday morning, March 12, 2023, was a rough start as I stayed on my normal schedule of 5:30 am up to 5:50 am, out the door and to the barn. Not only was I greeted with pitch-black darkness, but old man winter wanted to remind me that he is still alive and well, with 30°F temperatures and blowing snow. My Holstein steers gave me a look that kind of reminded me of my childhood Christmas morning wake-up call to my parents as I thrashed them out of bed at 5 am, wanting to open presents! So one must think why do we put ourselves through this every year and what is the best way to adjust to the time change? If you are not a fan of daylight savings time you can first blame Benjamin Franklin with his letter to the editor of the Journal of Paris, in his letter he recommended that people get out of bed earlier in the morning to minimize the use of candles and oil, this was meant as a joke, but it got the ball rolling. Later in 1895, a New Zealand Entomologist named George Hudson came up with a proposal of shifting a two-hour time shift so he could have more daylight to search for bugs! His proposal was two hours forward in the fall and two hours back in the spring. The first actual implementation of daylight savings time was during World War 1 in 1916. The German empire set the clock ahead one hour to less fuel and save on energy costs for war efforts. In the United States, we did not adopt daylight savings time until 1918 with a bill introducing the idea but it only lasted about seven months and people got tired of it (wonder why). Then when World War 11 began President Roosevelt re-established daylight-saving time and coined the “phrase wartime”. Lastly, in 1966, daylight savings time was set in stone with the Uniform Time act that regulated a uniform time change. For farmers, it is bad enough to adjust yourself to the time change but also the livestock as well. Here are a few tips that could help.

- **Gradually adjust feeding schedules-** Livestock do not wear a watch they watch the light gradually adjusting the feeding and watering schedule a few minutes each day. This will reduce the chances of acidosis and other digestive disorders such as bloating.
- **Keep feeders full-** for self-fed feeding systems such as bulk hog feeders or steer stuffers it is critical to keep feeders full and make sure doors are adjusted properly. This is important no matter what time of year it is but really important changes in the animal’s habits. Changes include weaning, vaccinations, weather, and time changes.
- **Complete evening feedings earlier-** We often hear the health benefits of getting a good night’s sleep and beginning fasting earlier before bedtime. Same can be true for livestock. Completing evening feedings earlier to compensate for the earlier morning chores can help regulate digestive systems.

